

# PUNCH



## CHARIVARIA

**A**N Admiralty announcement foretells a visit by members of the National Blood Transfusion Service to H.M.S. *Vanguard*, to take blood from volunteers among the ship's company. An example has lately been given in the higher ranks where Admiral of the Fleet Lord Mountbatten has had several pints drawn by a Captain Roskill.

### Hide that Billfold

AMERICAN tax-payers were only partly won over by Mr. Duncan Sandys'



declaration of independence on arrival at Washington—"I have not come here to beg." They noted the sly omission of any reference to borrowing or stealing.

### Why Not Euston?

PETROL rationing is throwing up all sorts of loosely related activity, including agitation by Bradfield (Essex) Parish Council for the reopening of its village railway station, recently closed down because the British Transport Executive claimed that it was not paying its way. And this, again, threatens to reopen the question of why the Executive should have singled out Bradfield in the first place.

### Lennox-Boyd to Stalk Eoka Chief

HOPES of a grown-up approach to the business of government have been dashed even earlier than expected: Mr. Marples has seen fit to open his career as Postmaster-General by getting himself photographed "helping a Liverpool postman with his round." Ministerial antics of this kind, whether designed to

persuade the public that a Postmaster-General really spends his time shoving pools coupons through letter-boxes, or simply to seize the flimsiest excuse for giving political cartoonists their raw material, have been outdated ever since Mr. Sandys, then concerned with slum clearance, took a token swipe at some east London rubble with a pick-axe and drew cries of "Stunt!" from the crowd. Plainly this lesson has not been learned. It would be tempting to appeal to Dr. Charles Hill, as State mouthpiece, to discourage his colleagues—except that it seems only too likely that he was the one to put Marples up to it.

### Bang Goes Saxpence

AT a time when the fires of independence are blazing uncontrollably in many a nation's breast it is reassuring to think that there remains an isolated outpost of reason where prudence still tempers emotion. The Scottish Labour Party has turned down the idea of a separate Scottish Parliament "on compelling economic grounds."

### Make-Do and Mend is Back

BRITISH dustmen are understandably put out by Lord Goddard's emphatic ruling that they are not entitled to take anything from dust-bins, but at least



they can console themselves with the thought that the decision comes at a time in our economic history when there is less and less worth taking.

### Unconverted Try

IT was high time that cricket metaphors were pensioned off by political speakers, and only fitting that a Socialist,

Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, M.P., should have made the long overdue switch to football. But it will take time before the images flow smoothly; straight bats and sticky wickets have tripped off the tongue effortlessly for generations and it was perhaps not surprising that Mr. Crossman, in telling an Oxford audience that Britain "has fallen out of the top division and now heads the second division," missed the chance to blame this on too many away fixtures.

### Irresistible

A SUBDUED but rich glow of admiration shone through newspaper accounts of a breaking and entering job in Chelsea, when the intruders ensured uninterrupted operations inside the premises



by sticking a "Don't Open" notice on the street door. Regular readers of crime news, on the other hand, regard the stratagem as an extremely poor example of applied criminal psychology.

### Look Out, Moths

THE once wild atom is being much publicized nowadays as a domestic pet, and the fanfare that sounded when Calder Hall began seeping atomic electricity into the homes of the people virtually banished from the public mind all thought of mushroom-shaped clouds and Japanese fishermen, leaving a snug impression of nuclear-powered reading-lamps, shavers, and tea-making sets. More recently, a distinguished Reith lecturer has been expounding the benefits of radioactive ash, which is said to be invaluable in preventing premature sprouting of onions and potatoes and in

raising the melting point of plastics. Also, of course, the stuff is awfully good for the carpets.

### Social Challenge

ADVANCES in scientific furniture manufacture, says a report, now render it possible to make chairs, tables, pianos



and the like in burn-proof wood—"Stub a cigarette out on it and no mark will show." This will simply drive cocktail guests to messing up the ash-trays.

### Switch

THERE is something rather bewildering about the *Daily Sketch's* account of why it did not send a reporter to watch the Duke of Cornwall going to school. "This experiment in the democratic education of the heir to the Throne," it says, "cannot succeed if the school is going to be surrounded by eager rubbernecks and sightseers." Even the forgetful British public will not have forgotten that the *Sketch* sent such an eager rubberneck to the Duke of Kent's twenty-first birthday party that she had to be seen out of the house. Presumably its editor believes either that twenty-first birthday parties are not democratic, or for some reason he didn't want it to succeed.

### Sober Optimism Note

It is a function of governments to look ahead, and an encouraging awareness of this lurks behind last week's Treasury announcement that for the first time for five years the Royal Mint is to undertake a run of gold sovereigns, as this "will afford experience to the Mint's workmen in this rather specialized craft."

### Another Lost Leader

WHEN Aidan relinquished the Socialist cause

It put TV fans in a whirl:  
Like Clem, they insist,  
In the next Honours List  
He must enter the Lords as an Earl.

## UNCOMMON MARKET

WHEREVER you went this week you found people freely acknowledging that the European Common Market idea is the most hopeful, peaceful, co-operative, forward-looking thing that has happened in Europe since the last hopeful, peaceful, co-operative, forward-looking thing, meaning the European Defence Community, died prematurely of envy, hatred and malice.

And the great and good news from Brussels, Rome, Krupp and Paris was that final agreement on the plan has almost nearly been reached as regards all points except those where differences of opinion still exist.

The simple, salient fact is that, apart from feeling exceedingly good, everyone is going to make a bundle of money out of this, except those who are going to find the going rather hard for the first hundred years or so.

Much of the credit—as a British Government spokesman is reported to have said yesterday, shouting to drown something Dutch, German, French, Italian and Belgian Government spokesmen were trying to say—must be awarded to the British Government.

Its attitude throughout has been admirable. The fact is being freely acknowledged in buses and trains, and even by pedestrians. For either the great Common Market is a bad idea, in which case the hesitations, counter-

suggestions and cries of "Look here, you fellows, just a minute," which have been noted in London, are good and may have kept us out of a bit of trouble; or it is a tip-top idea, in which case the fact that the British Government has made no really determined effort to sabotage and wreck it totally is proof of imaginative statesmanship of a high order.

Just possibly, too, the entire notion is partly good and partly bad. In such a case the attitude which nine British citizens out of ten—one may disregard the lunatic fringe which affects not to have heard of the European Common Market, or even the Free Trade Area, despite the latter being dearer to P. Thorneycroft than life itself—would wish to reach for, is one of ambivalence. Once again the Government—with which, for the sake of argument, one may include the Opposition—has rightly interpreted the spirit of the nation.

A major merit of the situation now arising, as distinct from some other situations one might mention, is that it is not merely tremendously important and marks a turning point (many situations do that) but it is absolutely clear, except for those elements which, as the man from Luxembourg told a man from the Congo who was trying to crawl under a tariff barrier, "are not yet clear."

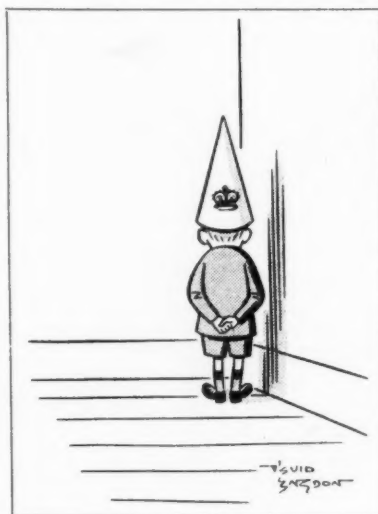
The principle thing to grasp about the plan is that the European Market and the Free Trade Area are, except for basic differences, essentially similar though intrinsically non-identical.

This is a, possibly over-simplified interpretation of the Thorneycroft outlook.

Just as an example of a nice attitude that people are having, we have this business of Tariffs on agricultural produce (beans and such). There is not going to be a "tariff" because that is a bad thing. There is going instead to be a "minimum price." That is a good thing, and just as effective in keeping out those cheap sprouts.

Also, as the whole plan is urgent, it is nice to know that agreement has been reached to implement its main provisions in a bare thirty years.

The future, if we can get there, is thus exceptionally bright. C. C.







# Dollars from the Dole

By R. G. G. PRICE

**N**OW that unemployment is rising, the market for sociological fiction is looking healthier. Many novelists must have half-written novels that have been lying in drawers ever since rearmament shortened the dole queue and it began to get harder to run a yacht on a close knowledge of the Unemployment Insurance Acts. In those tragic days a shamefaced return to the home borough faced writers who could not convince readers that they had suddenly become as U as they had recently been Non-U. To-day the brisker literary agents are advising their clients that with luck a slump will be following the boom. This is just as well as the lush pastures of high life are getting rather overcropped.

A few extracts from a novel of late 1957 will warn the public what it is in for.

"Groves be coom down in the world same as ither folk," said Granpop with cold satisfaction. "Two up an' two down and no staircase. Happen soon Groves'll be on one level."

"There'll be rioting if the Dales don't take the knock like ordinary people," said Ikia, looking up from her Civics prep. "What Doc Dale pulls in as strike pay every week would keep a family of 3·7 in calories for a month."

"Archers be fattening theyselves," said Gran, who talked a bit common but was quite middle-class, really, and always remembered not to call the chimney-breast a mantelpiece.

Bev and Cordell left Gran's early to go to the meeting. Alf Bloddle's lungs were still brazen, though he had not had an audience for many years. He shouted "If the bloody Minister of Food thinks we'll bloody well live on bloody plankton he's got another bloody think coming."

"What's 'bloody' mean?" Cordell asked in a whisper.

"———," Bev explained.

The protest march moved off smartly, as the marchers remembered their National Service square-bashing. With bicycle chains in pockets and last year's suits disintegrating, they moved through the grass-bordered streets between the blocks of peeling concrete. They sang





a laborious adaptation from a popular song made by an aged marcher who could remember the great days but found contemporary pops resistant to political slanting. Bev gave it all he had.

*Every tear in my eye is a prayer  
That Thorneycroft squeals till it hurts.  
My soul has one single desire,  
That the Tories should get their deserts.  
When the angels weep over the blind,  
halt and maim  
The People unconditional National  
Assistance claim . . .*

The chorus wavered as the leaders reached the police picket. Since vacancies in the Force had had to be filled by immigrant labour, relations had deteriorated. The sergeant shouted "Go back home, man, way back to shanty-town, and stay down," as with difficulty he stopped an enthusiastic Central European from lifting his Sten.

The fibre-glass and polythene furniture, the whispering air-conditioning, the Peter Scotts on the wall, were menacing because completely remote. Neville Brown took a few bets over the powder-blue telephone and looked up.

"Well?"

Outside were the ink-spot tests at the Ministry of Labour, the mysterious symbols scribbled indelibly on the indestructible cards by mean-faced men who were not going to be redundant themselves for anyone, the seats so near the vast screen you could feel your eyes being damaged. Cordell nodded.

"That's a good boy."

"'Tis cold all over," said Gran, "now the power be off. When us had a grate us could burn lavatory seat."

Alf Bloddle banged his empty glass on the counter. "In the old days we stood by the families who were evicted and fought the bailiffs. Now it's the Council that evicts us and when we fight back it's our own people on the Council we're fighting."

At Murphy's pawnshop, previously the super-market, a hastily-trained staff were learning to value musical instruments, table-lamps made from wine-bottles, and long-players. Furniture, radiograms, television sets and washing-machines had mostly gone back to the hire-purchase firms.

Monica got Bev's tea and then turned



to his great-grandmother with the bright kindness she usually managed to show on the old lady's monthly leave from the Home.

"There doesn't seem much for you. By the time you've bought the first thing on the shopping-list the money's gone and they won't give you an overdraft at the Ministry of National Assistance. I wanted to make some dainty *vol-au-vents* it said about in my woman's book, but after I'd got the cases there wasn't anything left for the filling."

"Didn't tha iver get learnt to shop, hinny?"

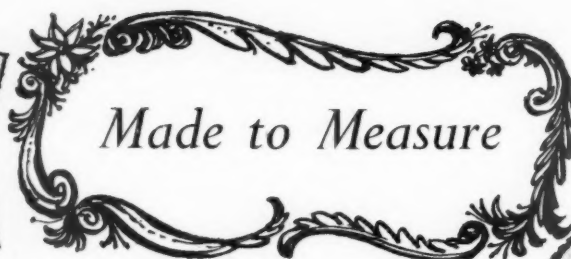
"What do you mean, 'shop'?"

There he sat, Jim Bradshaw. The thin mouth was taut above the aquiline chin. Outside in the off-buff waiting-room the candidates were cooling their

heels. He had picked his man already; but the farce must follow its traditional pattern. Old Joe must be allowed to make his speech about Keir Hardie. Sybil Patch must be allowed her question about Kashmir. The Organizer of the Unemployables Union must be allowed to hurl his labyrinthine and unintelligible sneers at the candidate. Not one of them would oppose him on the vote. He had kept the Chairmanship of the Housing Committee in his own hands and they were all council tenants. It was four hundred years since his family had failed to send their own man to Westminster.

#### The Bartered Bribe

"A Grand Jury in Los Angeles have indicted welterweight boxer Art Aragon on a charge of offering a bride to an opponent."  
*Bradford Telegraph and Argus*



**JANUARY 7.** Rang *Fable*. Pocton still itching. They had to remove his moustache over the week-end because of the falcon disease spreading to his face.

Lunch with Douglas at Debenham and Freebody's. I was on my way to meet him, trying to walk as the book says a model should ("Lift the ribs out of the stomach and grow . . . grow . . . grow"), when my eyes ("correctly focused just above the head of the person in front of you") lit upon a sign:

MISS FAY SCOTT-HEATHERINGTON  
SCHOOL FOR FASHION MODELS.

I went hot and cold all over with excitement. Luckily I was wearing high heels and a hat (I always do now just in case anybody else should feel like discovering me) so I screwed up my courage in both hands and went in. The beginning was rather like *Fable* Studio, dust-bins and lifts and things, only the bower was all mauve and grey this time and smelt of Schiaparelli's "Shocking." There was a girl with mauve lipstick sitting at a mauve counter. After a brief consultation with a mauve telephone she told me that Fay Scott-Heatherington would see me at 3.0 if I cared to step back. She handed me a mauve brochure.

I was so absorbed in this brochure over lunch at Debenham and Freebody's that Doug had to propose twice before I even heard him and then I was so distracted that I nearly said "Yes" instead of "Darling, let's wait a little longer. Shall we have steamed jam roll or ice cream?"

It said all about most women only living at half cock (or something like that) because their personalities aren't developed and they don't know how to gather up bag, gloves, parcels and umbrella gracefully or to curtsy to Royalty. It then said there were lessons in make-up, hair-styling, physical training, correct speech, etiquette, walking, posing and dressing to suit the personality, and all this in one month of evening

study. I was so excited that when I got back to Fay Scott-Heatherington's School I found that although I had gathered up gracefully my umbrella, gloves and parcels I had left my hand-bag under the table at Debenham and Freebody's. Had to rush back and find it with awful visions of Miss Scott-Heatherington in pale mauve silk and a silver lorgnette sighing for more courtly days when girls were punctual.

I was shown through a door marked FAY SCOTT-HEATHERINGTON into a room even mauver than the other one. Imagine my consternation! Fay Scott-Heatherington was a man!!! Not a very nice man either, I thought. He was fat and had hair like a coat of black enamel and orange smokers' fingers with gold signet rings. Sitting at a scrolly desk among all that dainty mauveness he looked like a slug on a bank of violets. He didn't get up when I came in, he just put down a photo of a girl with no clothes on (I wished he'd hide it under the blotter or something) and bent down and got a huge form out of a drawer. When he did this the little silver chair he was sitting in (I expect Fonteyn would have called it a Looee Cans Photoy) let out the most pathetic shrieks but didn't actually collapse.

"Name?" (He sounded bored.)

"Mavis Bone."

"We'll have to see about that. Measurements?"

"Thirty-four-Twenty-four-Thirty-eight."

"Real measurements?"

"They are real."

"You're all liars. Miss Jenkins."

The girl from the reception desk came in, put a pale mauve tape measure on the desk and went out again. Miss Scott-Heatherington wrote in violet ink on the form for some time. I noticed a scrap of mauve silk sticking out from under the lid of an ottoman in the corner. Just suppose . . . !

I was lost in gruesome meditations

when the little photoy gave out a series of stifled screams and I realized Miss Scott-Heatherington was advancing upon me with tape measure outstretched. "Better get you taped," he said. I must say I felt frightfully bashful, being measured by a man, but I suppose I shall have to get used to that sort of thing. "Thirty-five-Twenty-five-Thirty-nine," he said, and got back into the chair.

"But I measured myself only four days ago."

"Girls don't know where their busts are," he said, and did some more writing. "Stand up against that wall. Just as I thought. Left shoulder an inch and a half higher than the right. Went to a snob school, I expect. Can always tell. Carried your books around in a bag instead of on your back. Luckily we have exercises for that. Now lift up your skirt." I wrenched as best I could, feeling myself turn puce. I *would* be wearing my pencil-slim black gab. "Hold this between your knees and stand up straight." He handed me the School brochure. "Swim suits out," he grunted and did some more writing.

The chair warned me he was approaching again. Then something really awful happened. He *pinched my behind*. I was so surprised that I didn't know whether to slap his face, call for Miss Jenkins or wait to see if he did it again. I was still pondering when he said "Fatty tissue. It'll come off," and sat down again.

"Well, we've got a waiting list of three hundred and fourteen, but I'm prepared to let you jump the queue. The twenty-five pounds must be paid in advance and you must make up your mind within twenty-four hours. And we shall want a medical certificate." I asked why. "Some of the exercises are rather violent. We've had girls doing them for the wrong reasons."

Douglas was *livid* when I told him. What *can* he have meant?

SUSAN CHITTY

# Velly Good Show

By H. F. ELLIS

IT has been known for some time that students in the Soviet Union are becoming increasingly inclined to question the all-wisdom of those set in authority over them. But that there is unrest, too, in academic circles in China comes, I confess, as news to me. One had thought that the doldrums of life in that vast unimaginable country were as yet unruffled by any breath of revolt. Yet here is the Chinese Communist news agency itself announcing, with almost Khrushchevian frankness, an alarming spread of indiscipline in Shanghai schools. "Students of the third primary school," it says, by way of evidence in support of the general charge, "place waste-paper baskets over the open doors, scheming to make waste-paper basket headgears for their teachers."

It is certainly a small, an almost microscopic, beginning. So feeble, corny and elementary a gambit as the old waste-paper basket trick is unlikely to cut much ice with schoolmasters over here, most of whom would regard it, if practised upon themselves, as a proof not so much of indiscipline as of weakness, lack of imagination and low-quality resistance among their pupils. None the less, it would be a mistake to dismiss it as insignificant. The climate of opinion is different. Nor must it be forgotten that we have in this country a long tradition, unbroken (save perhaps in the joyless days of the Puritan ascendancy) for hundreds of years, of taking the micky out of masters: a lore, polished and refined by ages of trial and error: a technique of ragging faithfully handed down from generation to generation. In far-off Shanghai the boys are starting from scratch. They have no inherited experience on which to rely. They are as yet, in archaeological terms, at the stage of the crude palaeolithic axe—perhaps it would be fairer, since a waste-paper basket involves certain ballistic considerations, to say the mesolithic bone harpoon; one cannot expect them, unaided, to stumble all in a moment on the invention of the Wheel.

This is not to say that China has no pre-history of cultured persecution in the schools. I have before me a print from a Chinese painting (the date is

unknown to me, but it is certainly over fifty years old) showing "A Chinese School when the Master has Gone Out (Peking)." It is a pleasant scene. To the left is the long table with benches, now almost deserted, at which the boys normally sit. Upon the walls, L. and R., hang two typical Chinese pictures consisting almost entirely of water. Two boys are playing blind man's buff, upstage. In the foreground another attempts to pull his friend's left ear clean off at the roots, while a fifth kneels behind them on the floor, up, no doubt,

to some kind of inscrutable oriental mischief. The Master's desk, at right, bears the usual impedimenta of the profession, some books, a teapot and cup, a single chrysanthemum in a tall vase and a jar of pencils. Beside it, in the Master's chair and wearing, I suspect, the Master's hat, sits yet another boy. He is smoking a long pipe, presumably of opium, and has about him that indefinable, insolent air of the ringleader. Of the nine small boys portrayed in all, six (though the fact is not strictly relevant to the argument)



"Details are contained in the Shop Hours Bill, obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, price 3/6, closed 5.30 p.m."



wear the double pigtail that sprouts above each ear; the remainder favour the single centrally-situated style.

Admittedly, the Master has Gone Out (the picture ingeniously shows him, inset, hobbling off on some nameless errand). But any schoolmaster with a copy of this picture in front of him would agree, I think, that there is not likely to be all that much difference when he Comes In; these are not the kind of boys to be content with a poised waste-paper basket. Be that as it may, this is all ancient history. The dead hand of Communism fell on the old gay spirit of academic China. Ear-pulling ceased overnight. The Master, dressed like everybody else in blue cotton jeans, was no longer a figure of fun. Even when he went out (if indeed any such deviation was permitted), the boys, one may guess, were too busy swotting up their ideology to snatch an illicit pipe of opium, still less engineer some ingenious surprise against his return.

Now that at long last the first faint glimmerings of a healthy lack of respect for constituted authority are discernible in Shanghai, it is the clear duty of the West, and particularly of this country, to foster the incipient spirit of revolt by every means within our power. We need not doubt our ability to help.

Material aid, in the shape of squibs, drawing-pins, squeakers and so on, may be beyond our resources, but in the stored riches of experience we still lead the world. It is our technique, our expertise in schoolroom tomfoolery, that we must freely offer to these unskilled young raggies.

We must point out to them, in a series of introductory Far Eastern broadcasts, that no master's spirit has ever been broken by a waste-paper basket falling on his head. Psychologically the thing is all wrong. The master enters—and either something falls on his head or it does not; for better or worse, all is over in a moment. There is no suspense, and suspense is the secret of effective persecution. It is the awful Waiting for Something to Happen that kills. Ideally, a class should be able to reduce their master to a sweating, trembling wreck simply by doing absolutely nothing for twenty minutes. The technique of the Exaggerated Hush must be dinned without delay into the ears of these Shanghai irregulars. Not one man in a hundred can stand for long that uncanny silence, the twenty or thirty pairs of eyes fixed watchfully upon him, the air of suppressed gloating suggesting irresistibly that his next move, any

move at all, will be the fatal one. Paralysis sets in, in many cases, almost at once.

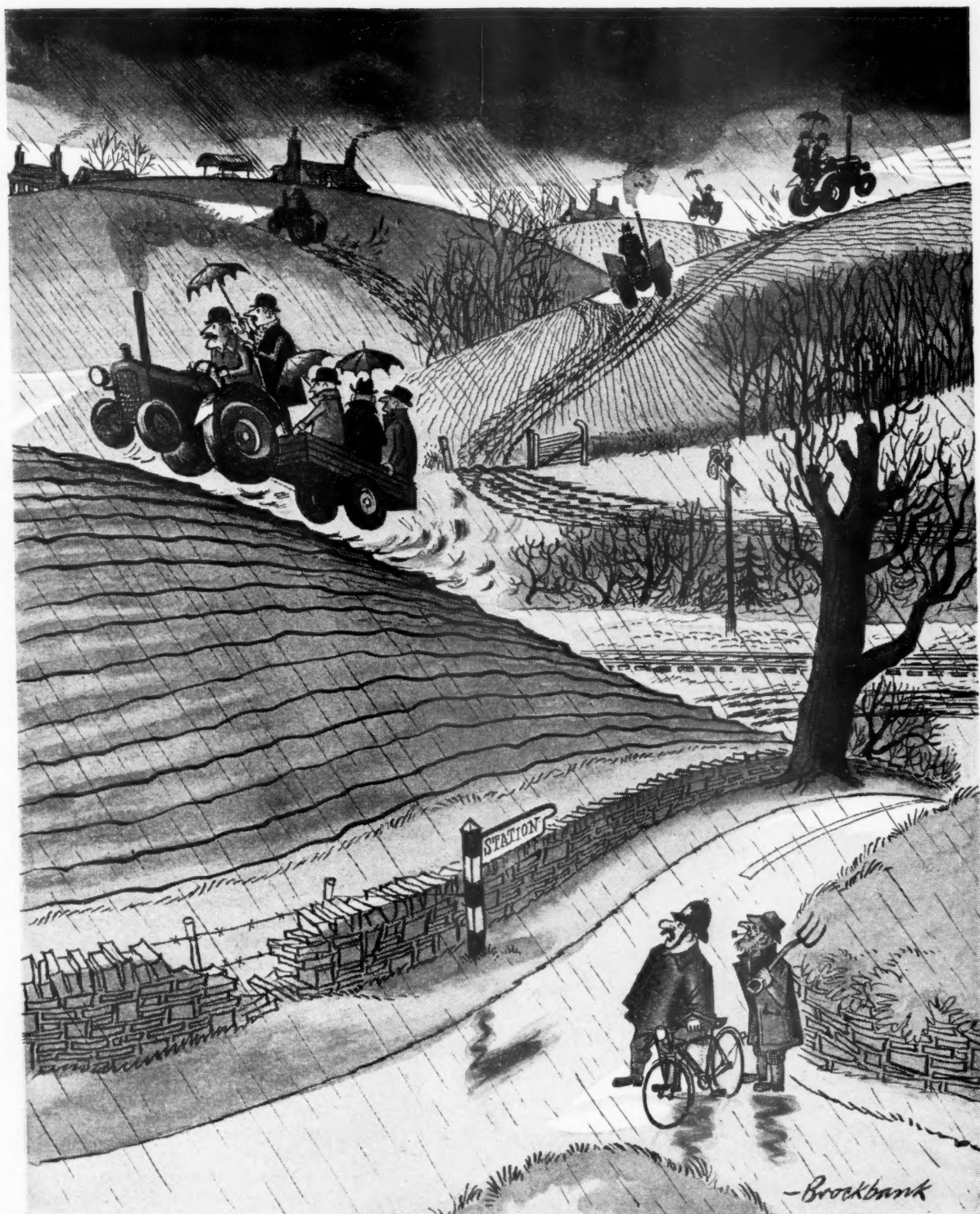
In these early broadcasts mention will also have to be made of Mass Eagerness (zealous attention, volleys of keen questions, etc., are always taken by a master to be some form of cover plan and help to keep him on tenter-hooks), Feigned Chewing and Subdued Cistern Noises or their Chinese equivalent. The Unexplained Object should also be the subject of a short talk (a piece of string hung over the blackboard will do; it doesn't matter what the object is, so long as the boys, by glancing surreptitiously at it from time to time, convince the master that it is there for a purpose and that they *want* him to take official notice of it). Naturally, this kind of psychological warfare will be ineffective without some groundwork of active insubordination; it is useless to hang things over the blackboard unless the master has been previously *conditioned* to fear string. But it can probably be assumed that the Chinese will themselves be capable of thinking up the simple mechanical preliminaries. From a balanced waste-paper basket it is only a short step to some arrangement of cords whereby, let us say, the chrysanthemum flies out of its vase every time the teapot is lifted. A hint or two should suffice here—not forgetting that, after so long an interval of non-resistance, even the Two-brick trick\* might work on a Shanghai usher.

This is no trivial matter. A proper disrespect for authority is, as every Englishman knows, the very lifeblood of democracy; and a time may come when it can be truly said that a battle of even greater import than Waterloo was won in the classrooms of the third primary at Shanghai. Let it never be added that we were even slower than Blücher in bringing aid.

\*For those who have never been to school, the procedure is as follows. A boy secretes two bricks in his desk, or about his person if feasible, and at a convenient moment hurls one of them through the classroom window. He then, immediately after the crash, holds up the other, exclaiming (in Chinese) "Look what just came in, sir!" An extra touch is given if another boy pretends to have been hit and is attended to by his neighbours, while the rest of the form rush out to apprehend the attacker and conceal the first brick. Once this trick has been worked, even a faint tinkle of glass—e.g. the rattling of marbles in the pocket—will start the average master shaking.



"George is waiting for nuclear power."



"Lunnon train's bang on time."

# Methodism

By ALEX ATKINSON

**A**METHOD is by definition a special form of procedure, and The Method is a very special form indeed, under the terms of which Mr. Rod Steiger is at this moment (and I have this on no less an authority than the *Daily Express*) prowling about London saying "Ya" instead of "Yeah" to waiters in order to prove to himself that he is engaged in making a film about a German. If he were making a film about a rustler he would no doubt be saying "Yup," like Gary Cooper. Gary Cooper, on the other hand, doesn't care much for the Method, and will continue to say "Yup," on and off the set, even if he has to make a film about Lord

Byron. A situation of considerable quaintness might easily be engineered by putting both Cooper and Steiger in one film, to play Othello and Iago. There they would sit, in the studio canteen, chatting over their roast lamb and green peas:

STEIGER (*looking furtively under the table*): I cannot feel at ease to-day. I fear there is some cunning enemy abroad, who waits his crucial moment for revenge, or some vile mischief that I know not of, viler than any that has yet befall'n.

COOPER (*enigmatically rolling a cigarette*): Yup?

STEIGER: I pray you, pass the minten flavoured sauce, that I may swim my plate with luscious juice, and so put off, by thoughts of spicy meat, the heavy burdens that do crowd my mind.

COOPER (*passing the mint sauce*): Sure. (*He spills some, and takes out his bandana handkerchief to mop it up*).

STEIGER (*starting back in horror, thereby joggng a STARLET's elbow at the next table*): No, no! Not that! Take, friend, that rag away!

STARLET: Cripes!

COOPER: What's eatin' yuh?

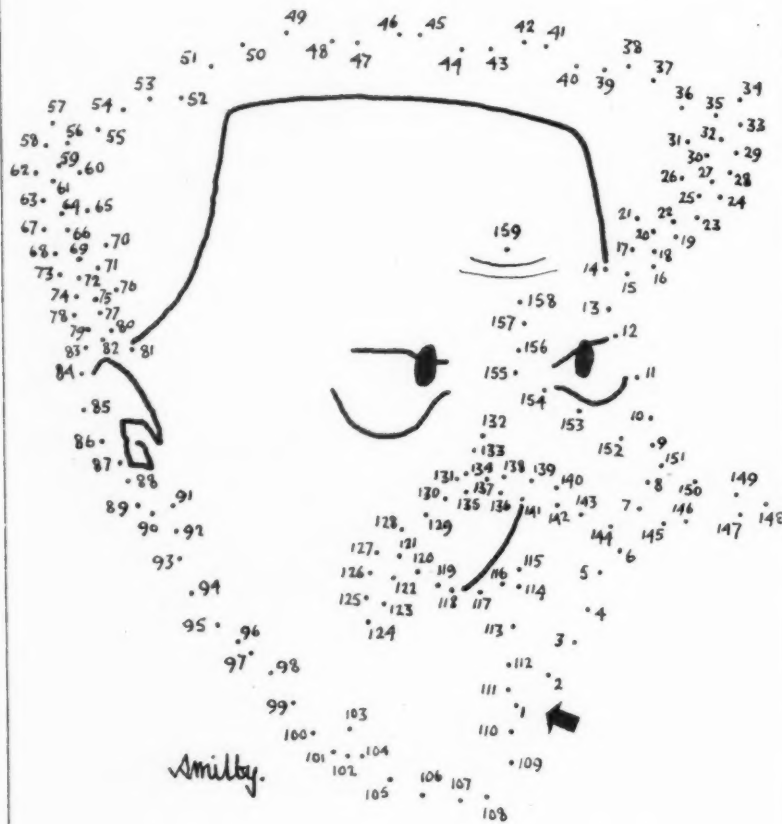
STEIGER (*looking at the handkerchief with a terror-stricken expression*): Mine eyes do smart to see this gaudy cloth: it has some dark significance withal, the which I shall not know until too late! (*Broodingly*): My taste for food is gone. (*To the STARLET*): Your pardon, wench. (*Rising*): Your pardon all. I'll choose some lonelier bench, where I may cogitate what this may mean. Meantime, good Iago, think on our next scene. (*Exit, pursued by WAITRESS with bill*).

COOPER (*looking around, lazily speculative*): Who's for a game of craps?

The Method has been with us, off and on, ever since a man called Alexeyev, working under the name of Konstantin Sergeivich Stanislavsky, decided that actors (not to mention scenery) must give a complete illusion of reality. He was prevented from putting on *Peter Pan* at the Moscow Arts because at that time there wasn't an actor in the whole of Russia willing to chop his hand off to play Captain Hook; and the number of apprentice boy actors who fell in the Moskva while trying to fly without wires at an audition has never been expressly stated.

Nowadays the Actor's Studio in New York is keeping up the tradition by teaching people to be Marlon Brando, who was probably disgusted at the way nobody got actually stabbed in the film of *Julius Caesar*. The Studio teaches the young 'uns how to go on to a stage looking as though they'd just run ten times round the block. There's no trick to it: you simply run ten times round a block, and then you make your entrance, and there you are. If the

## Draw Your Own Politicians





audience don't think you *look* as though you've just run ten times round a block, that only shows how dumb an audience can be. They just don't know what acting *is*, that's their trouble. And it's no good your telling me you've seen Laurence Olivier throw down the evening paper in the wings, stub out his cigarette on the back of a flat, and go on the stage to electrify a thousand people with a performance of *Richard III* that will never be bettered even if one of these clever young men gets his shoulder specially dislocated and spends three months being Richard in the bosom of his family, because that's nothing but genius, and doesn't count. What you don't seem to realize is that Olivier probably couldn't run ten times round the block to save his life, so what chance has he? One of these days he's going to find himself cast as a man who keeps *on* running ten times round blocks and we'll see how he makes out. We'll just see, that's all.

During my own spell as an actor I was too busy to bother with the Method, what with twice-nightly, and the landlady complaining about people sleeping in their make-up, and one thing and another, but I did have a special procedure: if I had to be a man with a limp I would fasten a piece of stick down my leg, like a splint, and make the muscles of my face move to give an impression of wincing at each alternate step. I know this was cheating, and I know the audience would have been much happier if I'd got someone to give me a kick on the shin just before my first entrance, but I was a simple soul: I thought I was supposed to be *acting*.

I did run up against the Method twice, though. Once when a producer arranged an eight-foot drop for me at the end of the scaffold scene in *Maria Marten*, with a noose around my neck and two stage-hands underneath with a first-aid kit in case I fell on anyone: and once in a play by James Thurber, in the course of which somebody had to give me a glass of bicarbonate of soda. The A.S.M., a Methodist if ever there was one, had prepared just that, and I drank it. Ah, well—God bless you, child, wherever you are. And may you never be asked to provide a dead body, a nice coal fire, or an express train screaming past the window in the back wall. Or, if you are, let there not be too much madness in your Method.



*A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow!*

# Little Hound

By G. W. STONIER

OUT of the Smalls it came, out of winter. Pat had been ill, and in the evenings, while the snow rubbed against the window, we plunged into Mediterranean cruises, irrigations, furs, touch-typing, hypertension (mightn't this be her malady?), sewing machine for hire, mushroom cultivation, gentleman wishing meet lady with bust—all the fun of the Personals—among which had caught Pat's eye "Miniature Dachshund."

It swam in front of us, vanished.

It—though we weren't to know this—had been born on December 3.

She was living on fish and mashed potato and had got into the way of saying "We'll have that miniature dachs, shan't we?" and I'd answer "Yes, of course," and turn to the news, which was of a man with seven cats who warmed his feet in the oven, wore his clothes till they dropped, dropped himself, and left £15,000 to his bank manager.

"Never!" exclaimed Pat, "though I could do it myself"—meaning the oven—"bring me a hot-water bottle, please."

For weeks it had been freezing, and of the four snowdrops that had pushed up in our window-box, three had bent over and died.

The sun shone fitfully. One afternoon I halted before a shop window, bright with objects; a peacock spread its tail with all the arrogance of its 1½ inches, and round it, also spreading tails, was a family of chicks. This *chinoiserie* I couldn't resist.

But Pat—now on milk only—could and did. The peacocks enjoyed a brief favour and then retired to an unlooked-at shelf.

I couldn't come in from a walk or from some business or shopping errand without her inquiring "Where's our dachs?"

Where *was* it?

Lost among the Smalls! We looked and looked, and everything else came

round: Chinese conversation, blushing, riding in the park, ants for the handbag, everything except—

And there at last it was: "Miniature Poodles and Dachshunds." Hampstead number. Pat rang, repeating for my benefit, "Red dachs puppy . . . nine weeks . . . male . . . fifteen"—here her gaze slid away—"fifteen guineas . . . 4½lb. . . ." her eye was back, leaping.

When could I go?

To-morrow, I thought.

Why not now?

Oh! . . . It was 8.15 p.m.; round the street lamp below hung, hung rather than fell, a glinty dust as of moonbeams.

"Look at the snow," I said.

"You can take a taxi."

"All the way to Belsize Park?"

"All the way back, anyhow." An old blanket ripped in half was thrust under my arm.

"I'll need a book; at this particular hour the Tube—"

"Here!"

"What! Colley Cibber! I don't suppose anyone ever picked *him* before."

"Oh get on—what is it now?"

"Spectacles."

"In your hand. Hurry! Hurry! Ring up if there's anything! If you're the least doubtful, ask to see one of the poodles! But it must be black, and it'll be an awful nuisance with brushing and clipping—Now, what's keeping you?"

"Nothing—"

"Go!"

So, with bundle and book, and not quite believing in my own mission, I went. Doggy!—would you believe it? Though frind, I've known plenty of dogs, good dogs, dogs dirty and gay; and once a Labrador next door committed suicide. But there's something masonic about the whole business.

A cur at the station gives me such a look: one I suppose I shall get used to returning.

\* \* \* \* \*

The lady introduces herself cheerfully as Bassett, and ranges about a large sitting-room, with several fires, which at the moment serves as a playground for three pups: a tough little griffon like a major of hussars, a Chihuahua (Chiwawa she says) in some agony of disintoxication, and—under a low armchair—the little red dachs that is—or is not—ours. All I can see is a tan shoe-toc, smudged black. It seems to find the Chihuahua's nerves, the griffon's heartiness, trying.



He is a shy one, or perhaps sly.  
The lady has poured me out a whopping gin-and-French and gone downstairs after the grandfather; thus, I suppose, in the approved fashion, "leaving us together."  
I drink, smoke and look in the fire.  
I twiddle fingers. Eyes, sloc eyes, are watching.  
I scratch the carpet. Nose lifts.  
I whisper or croak "Hey!" Up comes the griffon, tumbling as it were over its sword, and eyes and nose vanish.

This can't go on. I get down on my knees (listening for footsteps), growl amiably, whine, bob my head up and down, and finally drag him out—like an over-boiled chicken—and settle him on my lap. He lies quite still.

The lady returns with such a glossy, quiet, neat stranger, who has won prizes and whose head, as he stands on the sofa back, turns caricature to elegance. He is three.

His grandson snores. He has had his meal; and I inquire about diet, ills, pills, wormings, inoculations. His pedigree, with such names as Charlotte and Prince Albert, is handed over.

"He'll soon get used to you," I'm assured, as the blanket wraps all but a nose-tip cold and wet.

"Yes," I reply, "but shall we get used to him? He'll grow human. What about us? Doggier and doggier, Mrs. Bassett! I've watched it happen. However, it's more my wife's problem than mine."

"I dare say you'll work out something—here's your taxi."

Outside it's fearfully cold, and I dive across the pavement hugging my secret like some mock-modest politician among the photographers.

It is a weird journey through the soft streets. Whenever the black tip looks like emerging, we bump, and it withdraws.

Murmurs, tickles are no good. I sing down the Marylebone Road—having in fact once served an apprenticeship there as a choirboy—and my performance is rewarded in Portman Square, where he puts his head out and stares through the window. Snow meanders, the coloured lights change; he's intrigued; then our swashbuckling sends him back.

I am thankful, to tell the truth, that he doesn't struggle or cry—do anything



—and we arrive at my Pimlico square in a quietude satisfying to me. Clutching him with one hand, I trickle silver into the taximan's palm with the other.

"Cold," he says: the *not juste*, comprising my maladroitness, the puppy's plight, a shivering family at home, and that need of the Cockney to apply a balm of the obvious.

As the front door closes behind me—behind us—I feel an exhilaration. We have come through!

She sits up in bed, arms outstretched. I might be the stork in a picture book.

"Come to mother, come along then—"

"He's Mungo."

"Mungo?"

"There was a Mungo Park who explored the Zambesi, I think, and got drowned by natives."

"Mungo! . . . Don't take any notice of them, little pip, little snook—"

Unblanketed, a lost worm, he crawls up her arm and lies with his head hidden on her shoulder.

We laugh, croon, hold hands. (Oh, lord, to think I enjoyed a high, dry upbringing with cats!) Pat is delighted. He's home—the Small incarnate—clinging, if not sure. I pour her out a

pint of milk, and go into the other room to resume a heel-tap of *rosé* and to write—such is journalism—negligently about the Riviera.

But every few minutes I have to pop back to see how they're getting on.

He's settling!

He's licked her nose!

On newspapers spread for the purpose he has actually done what he's been taught to do!

It's all quite incredible.

And then he's gone.

"Where," I ask breathlessly—"where is he?"

She nods down the bed.

"Not underneath?"

"Yes!"

"He'll choke!"

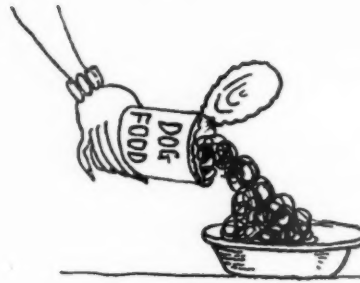
"Not he . . . he's licking my toes."

Well, of course he's a badger-hound. But I shudder as I leave them together—she reading and he earthed; illness has separated us so that the big bed is hers—theirs—while I fit the slim, happily long settee: will he have come up in the morning, or stayed down, too scared, too quiet ever to know the day?

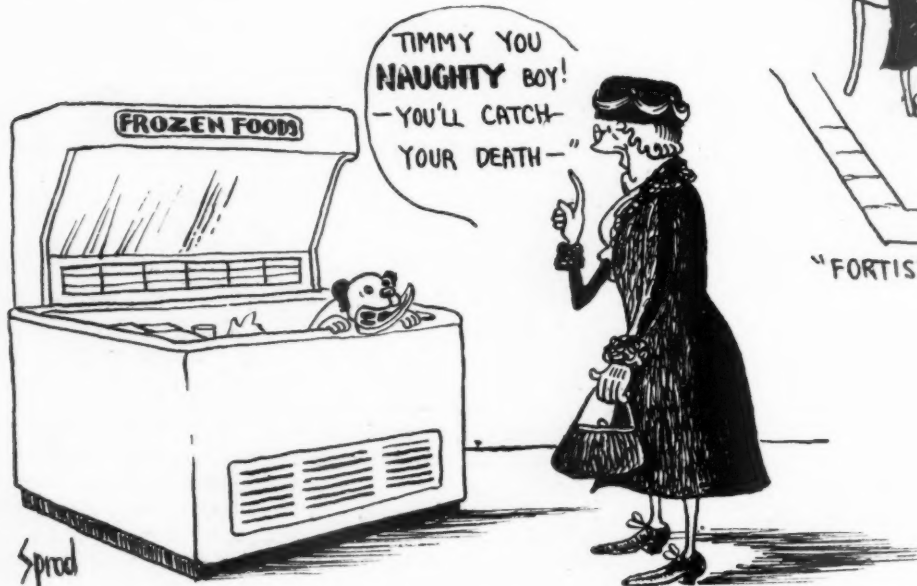
Such my nightmare; and it's small consolation—the thought suddenly comes to me—that I've left Cibber in the Tube.



# THE DOG IN HER LIFE



"FORTISSIMO, GIRLS, — WE MUST AVERT



Sprod





## In the Toad's Head

"THAT," said Miss Universe 1960, "is the sort of stone I mean, but it's a bit on the small side. I mean," she explained, "to be decent, one would have to wear something else as well." This speculative, but stimulating, glimpse into the future is suggested by the news that a couple of prospectors have hacked out an emerald whose measurements will compare not unfavourably with those of the average size bikini—eight inches long by three inches across. The clumsy oafs are said to have hacked with more good will than judgment, otherwise the end-product would have been even bigger, but for all that it is a stone to be reckoned with.

Clearly, this is a moment when the whole approach to jewellery will have to be reconsidered. Those who priggishly condemn large stones as vulgar will have to raise their relative standards, while, all over the world, women previously secure in the possession of emeralds the size of lollipops will be experiencing the pang that assails a fisherman who has landed a six-inch trout only to see a rival go by with a three-pounder. They may comfort themselves that in some circumstances it takes great skill to land a dear little bar brooch, while in others any gauche young girl can marry a tiara with trimmings, but there will be searchings of hearts and safes, and the soul-searing question "Have I been wasting my time?" will disturb the rest of many who were previously reposing on their diamond laurel-leaves.

Not that the suitable size and shape of any jewel is a new problem. It is as old as the rocks that Cleopatra hung on

herself, and probably a good deal older. The two first consciously Neolithic women discussing the last Palæolithic woman certainly remarked "How can she go about in that dreary old necklace? Good stones they may be, but why string them on elk gut?" (Being Stone Age women they were shrewd about stones, though later on of course Bronze Age women made themselves most disagreeable on the subject of backward frumps, unable to grasp the importance of an ornate bronze setting.) However, these reactions are at least straightforward and not complicated by the priggishness that would wave aside the offer of the eight-inch emerald on the ground that it was ostentatious. Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, was a particularly smug exponent of this point of view. For the benefit of those untarred by the brush of a classical education, she was the Roman matron who, when visited by a bejewelled caller, waited till her sons came in from school and then remarked "These are my jewels." Considering what most sons look like on coming in from school, she must have had a nerve, or Roman households must have kept a slave in the hall to wash and brush up the children.

Priggishness has its pitfalls too. Michael Arlen referred to a cocotte who refused the gift of a large, flawless ruby on the ground that it was an insult to be offered such a priceless jewel in public, this heroine being at the moment engaged in losing her back teeth at baccarat. The situation was further complicated by the jeweller, who as it happened was proposing to

make this generous gesture, pointing out that the ruby was not so much priceless as valueless, because its flawlessness made it only too easy to fake. Even the adroit Mr. Arlen balked at telling us how everyone concerned extricated themselves from this moral and financial impasse. We all know whose price is far above rubies, but there is no scriptural authority for fixing the reverse state of the market.

It will be sad indeed if there is any inclination to shun the eight-inch emerald as unsuited to the Common Man's Common Woman. There may be bigger things in store, and no one would wish by straining at a jewelled gnat to spoil their chances of a good gulp at a jewelled camel. Shakespeare and anyone who in the late war shared a cellar with a toad knows that he, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head; and who would want to be worse off than a toad?

V. G. P.

## The Freudian Fathers

"America is as sexually obsessed as a mediæval monastery."—John Osborne

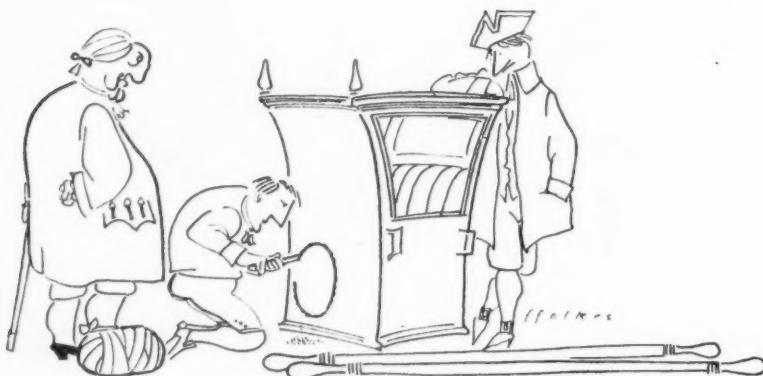
LOOK back in anger at the past,  
Play the severe iconoclast!  
Summon mild monks from silent crypt,  
Illuminated manuscript,  
Cathedral choir, Latin, Greek  
And the fasts of Passion Week,  
Wherever they were well employed  
To the judgment seat of Freud.

On trial: their enamelled Books of  
Hours,  
Gregorian chant and Gothic towers  
Fretted with intricate balustrade—  
How could such things as these be made  
Without the kick of alcohol,  
Without the thrill of Baby Doll?

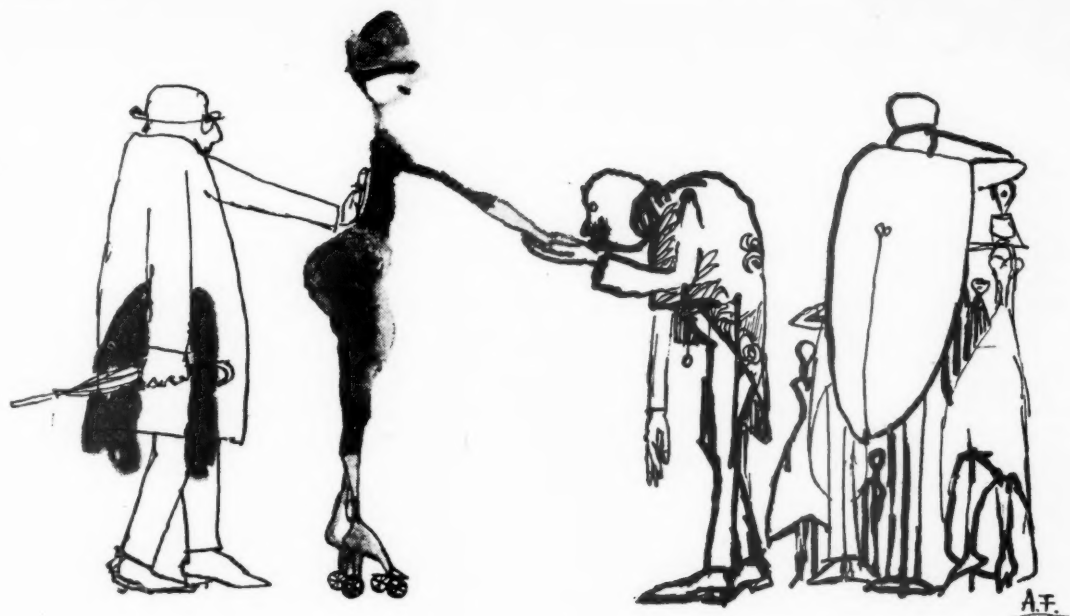
Benedictines, Carmelites  
Osborne has studied; now he writes:  
Those monks were all obsessed by sex.  
Religious love is sex sublime  
And all the ritual pantomime.  
Common or garden history books  
Were written by a gang of crooks:  
Correct their hopeless hocus-pocus,  
Bring the picture into focus.

Praise be to Sex, a myth's destroyed  
By Osborne with the help of Freud,  
All sacred history is bunk  
—Except the "hep" Maria Monk.

VINCENT CRONIN







## SHOW YOUR BEST ONLY

Recorded in Paris by André François

They do feed



The "Mind if I sit on the arm of your armchair"  
technique grand-robe

# Fashion with the Lid On

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

SOMETIME during the period between the wars there was a London fashion editress who used to arrive fifteen minutes late for every dress show. That, of course, is not an unusual thing to-day; it was the manner of her entry that made her tardiness remarkable. Whereas to-day's late-comer scuttles in apologetically and gratefully accepts a draughty seat by the door, the Hon. Mrs. X stopped the show.

She was preceded by a cloud of perfume and two pekinese: black pekinese, because white were too lethargic. She wore a spray of orchids on her coat, which was constructed of

two thousand mink tails. This was a creation entirely of her own conception, mink tails at that time being considered waste products. She had seen them lying about the floor in Bradley's workrooms and demanded that they be swept up and lashed together to make a coat. They dripped from her shoulders to an uneven hem-line and her mink tail hat, carrying out the peke motif, cascaded over her forehead into her eyes. She was, by all accounts, a thing to see.

And it is this kind of thing that is rarely seen, more's the pity, in the fashion world to-day. Call it panache, call it ballyhoo, or call it baloney, it fulfils an important function. It is the erratic impulse which jerks the merry-go-round into faster revolutions whenever it shows signs of slowing down; it is the shot of benzedrine which stimulates by distortion, giving meaning to the meaningless, importance to the unimportant. Without it, ennui, the eternal enemy, steals up. To what purpose, thinks ennui's victim, are all these fashion occasions? To what end are directed these undeniable talents and extempore abilities? All these gilt-edged invitation cards, these martinis, this mutual admiration and reciprocal back-scratching, these stylized photographs and convivial public relations, these facetious compères and elegant commères, these caviar tit-bits and couturiers' kisses . . . are we just making hey-day while the sun shines, or is it all necessary to the routine process of making and marketing clothes? Only

let us believe that there is some more æsthetic purpose than mere trade; let us believe in a Spirit of Fashion, a spoilt god-child of the arts, essential to the culture of a civilized capital city.

If there indeed be such a blithe spirit it must be nourished on something less monotonous than daily champagne. London fashion is too decorous, too well-conducted: it is fashion with the lid on. Gossip travels underground, and scandal goes by grape-vine; but there should be fire, not just smoke. Let us have blazing indiscretions and at least one flaming feud. Slanders should be shrieked down the wires after breakfast, embellished over luncheon, and given stimulants in the cocktail bars at dusk. Editresses should lead such legendary lives that they never appear in their offices and are known to their staff only through the "In London Last Night" column. There should be a lionized photographer who wears an ocelot bow tie with a nylon smock, reputedly washed out each night and drip-dried in his dark room; there should be a public relations man so exquisite that he never touches a telephone, a typewriter, or a secretary, but sends out press notices hand-written in violet ink. There should be couturières who receive every Wednesday in demi-semi-négligées, lying on zebra skin *chaises-longues*; and model milliners who refuse to make hats, even for titled heads, unless the spirit moves them: vodka, or preferably absinthe. Doom, dementia and decadence should stalk the couture salons, while elderly peers hover at the mews doors, playing hookey from the House of Lords to meet the model girls.

But what are the facts, the guaranteed accurate facts? These are they: No coroneted queues in the mews; fashion's top public relations man has six telephones on his desk; photographers wear lounge suits. The editress of our leading fashion magazine is efficient, hard-working, and returns to a farm in Essex every evening with her husband; model milliners tend to be devoted wives with doted-on infants; designers, instead of lyricizing upon their creative inspirations, talk of their job (Digby Morton), their shop (John Cavanagh), and of being twenty-five years in the trade (Victor Stiebel). They never



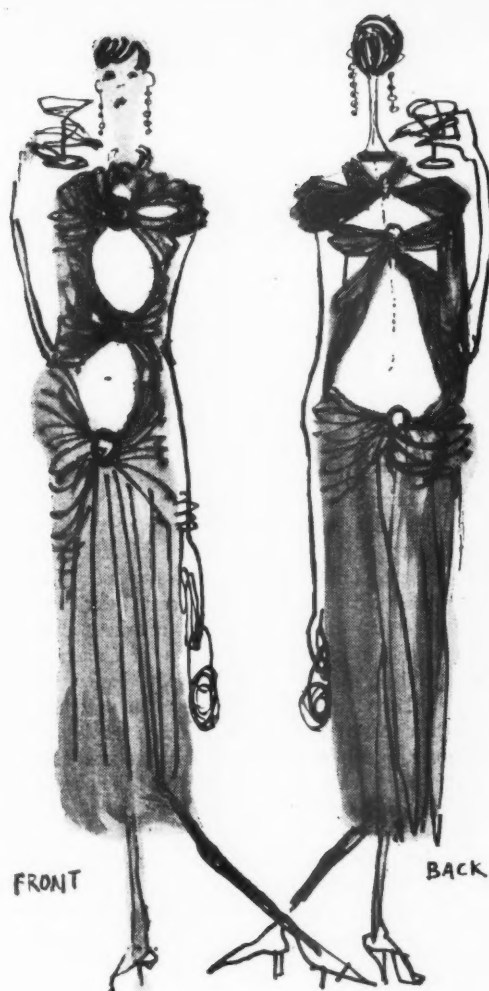
This classical lovely "Negativeshapedold-tango" dress is always a success

receive in their dressing gowns although, since these are the accurate facts, it must be stated that on January 17 last Mr. Hartnell showed his lingerie to the Press.

Positively, then, no panache: just a few traditional affectations and one or two slightly enlarged egos—nothing that could be called eccentric. Why is everything so much duller than in the nineteen-thirties? Is there no designer capable of saying the outrageous things that Peter Russell used to say? But perhaps those old *mots* were really not so shocking. Legends grow with the years, and time is a great embroiderer. Take the Hon. Mrs. X. There may well have been only a thousand mink tails to her coat; quite probably she had only one peke. It follows by the same token that time may embroider our fashion scene to-day. Twenty years on we may look back in envy to a world of wickedly witty personalities, to what will be called the extravaganzas of fashion's flagrant 'fifties.

Why, how period in reminiscence will this week of Spring Collections seem! We shall recall a Mayfair that was the last oasis for elegant escapists, and speak of how Lady Pamela Berry, President of the Society of London Fashion Designers, drove herself round to the dress shows in a miniature Italian Isetta, a glass bubble on tiny wheels. The simple fact of this sensible acquisition in a time of petrol shortage will become a masterly piece of character building. Accurately enough, we shall relate how, in her hat of scarlet feathers, perched with her black-gloved hands on the wheel, she looked like one of those rather menacing tropical birds in a glass cage. Less accurately, we shall remember a flowered toque which made her look like an artificial posy in a Cellophane gift box.

As time goes on, she will in anecdote become another Mrs. Algernon Stitch. Mrs. Stitch, an early Evelyn Waugh character, drove herself round London in a baby car, "brand-new twice a year, painted an invariable brilliant black, tiny and glossy as a midget's funeral hearse," bowling along the pavements to avoid the traffic blocks. There was the incident when Mrs. Stitch caught sight of a politician she wanted to lobby, and drove after him as he dived down some public steps in Sloane Street. And there will be an apocryphal story of Lady



"Southernexposure" (best parts only) by F. Malbains

Pamela chasing after the President of the Board of Trade, ignoring the policeman at the Members' Entrance and following in hot pursuit down the passages to the kill in the lift. Or, alternatively, the tale will be that, late for Worth's dress show, she drove straight through the commissionaire's legs and up the staircase, pulling up with a squeal of brakes in the salon. Yes, it will probably be that alternative, because she had no need to chase Sir David Eccles. By a turn of political events outside Lady Pamela's control, his first public engagement in his new office was to honour his predecessor's promise and become the first President of the Board of Trade to open a fashion show. In effect he was an unexpected windfall for Lady

Pamela: he fell right into her lap. That he should happen to be one of the Top Twelve best-dressed M.P.s was just another happy coincidence.

The dress show Sir David opened at Grosvenor House was the first combined presentation by the sixteen new Associate Members of the Society of London Fashion Designers: five milliners, two furriers, two hairdressers, one corsetier, one shoemaker, a Scottish knitwear house, a woollen fabric merchant and a leather merchant, a stocking manufacturer—and a firm of dyers and cleaners distinguished by the Royal Warrant and by taking in the couturiers' cleaning. All had paid their fair share, and all were expecting a fair showing: much oil was required by the many



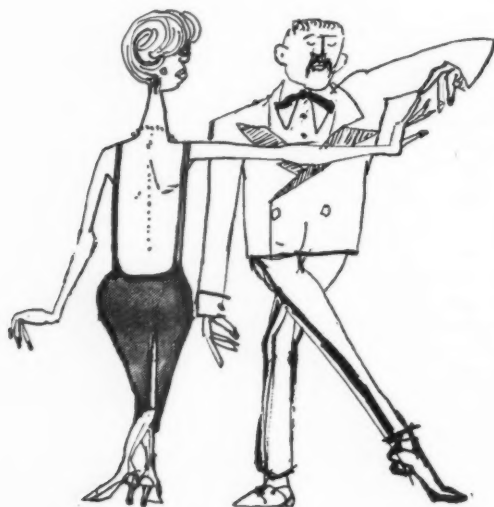
organizers to pour on the troubled undercurrents. But that was all kept *sub rosa*, under the lid. To the audience everything appeared smooth and unruffled, with models gliding uninteruptedly to the tinkling tunes of a long-playing pianist; while outside in the ballroom's foyer it was just like a charity bazaar with sixteen stalls (information and photographs only) attended by sixteen pretty, smiling girls.

The clothes and accessories presented were acclaimed as elegant and appropriate. They were in good taste, wearable and, to borrow a word much in vogue, *understated*—or, to use one's own word, dull. That was the general impression at the time; but the subconscious eye makes its own selections. It recorded, out of a presentation of sixty models, such delightfully decadent items as: evening shoes with glass chandelier heels; theatre boots of brocade and velvet; green veils to small hats, and monstrous hats tied on with floating yards of chiffon; a rose-red corset, called a *controlette*, displayed (when the lights had been lowered) under a cumulus cloud of star-spangled tulle; sequined eyebrows, and bleached hair sprayed with star-dust, skewered through with diamond daggers; and, as a *finale*, a floor-length fur evening coat of natural long-haired fitch, which swept out to a train at the back and was worn with an osprey headdress . . . the

complete manifestation being entitled "Call me Madam."

Strange that it could have seemed dull at the time—as did, indeed, the reception that evening for overseas visitors and what were called, rather flatteringly as regards some who came, "the V.I.P.s of the Fashion World." Tedious things always drag on beyond their time, and it is the parties which never really integrate that take longest to reach the point of disintegration. "How," said the Chairman of the Designers to the restaurant manager, "do you wind these things up?" "We close the bar and turn out the lights." "Well then, close the bar and turn out the lights!" And that was the end of the party. If only we could truthfully say it was the beginning—but London fashion is so very well-behaved.

Then followed the couture collections. Four shows a day for three long days on end, and their most noteworthy incident a minor journalistic scoop: the editress of *Harper's Bazaar* appearing at Hardy Amies' opening in a spring hat by Rudolf which had been shown only that morning, with Ronald Paterson's collection. Had she gone up at the end of the show: "Darling Ronny, that hat, the one called St. Trinian's, it was madly delicious!" and had he automatically, unthinkingly, said "But Eileen, it would be even more heaven on you," thus foolishly de-hatting his



The "Heavenknowswhathappensinfront" business-like dancing dress (available in scarlet, turquoise-yellow) by H. de Vichy

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The "Prettyfaceleavetherestvague" model by J. Taffetas

afternoon show? Or had she laughingly tried it on in the models' dressing-room and, still laughing merrily, mingled with the departing audience surging to the door? Did she, in fact, do a Nina?—a neat piece of salon lifting.

And then another millinery *coup*: the *Observer's* fashion editress, wearing a little pale blue June-in-January toque. It was made for her by Madame Vernier, to go with her blue satin scarf, a present from Christian Dior, embroidered with his name and hers . . . and she off to Paris the next week! Fragrant enough were the facts, yet time will make them sweeter still. We shall insist that the scarf was embroidered with *Christian Dior loves Alison Settle*; and we shall relate how this piece of Gallic gallantry so enraged the London designers that their Chairman took immediate action, commissioning a Jacqmar scarf designed by Cecil Beaton: a design of a white turtle dove flying towards Kemsley House from an upper window in Grosvenor Street, with this message in its beak: *Victor Stiebel loves Ernestine Carter*.

And yet, at the time, everyone said what a very dull week it was, the week of the London Collections. It all goes to show that dullness, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

## In the City



### Neotechnic Colonization

FROM the point of view of British investment it all makes sad reading—this nowadays is the standard valedictory pay-off to articles explaining the piecemeal shrinkage in our overseas assets. The financial papers spot a preliminary flutter in the price of some British-owned mining, oil or development company and announce that The Yanks Are Coming. There are denials, further rumours, wild fluctuations in the price of the company's shares (always of course to the advantage of the few in the know), and then the announcement of the *fait accompli*. The Yanks have landed.

Trinidad oil, West African shipping, ores, crops and trade, Canadian and Middle East oil, Brazilian iron . . . the list is familiar. Mr. Shinwell has returned from Australia with news that the Americans are buying up great tracts of the Continent "at rock-bottom prices." Every time that Wyattting breaks out in TV's "Panorama" we are told that the dollar is replacing the pound somewhere or other, that Coca-Cola signs are proliferating, that go-getting American technicians are moving in, and that the British are packing up. Invariably there is an interview with the British representative on the spot. Bent and harassed by the white man's burden he looks out from the veranda of the residency on Constitution Hill at the new reduction plant and ferro-concrete office blocks, sips his tepid Scotch and answers Mr. Wyatt's strange questions . . .

"Are you happy?"

"It's a pity. There's great affection for the British here, but naturally enough the natives welcome the American development project."

"Do you get on well with the Americans?"

"The natives are still very friendly towards us, but they seem to resent our preoccupation with democratic self-determination. Frankly, they would rather have conveyors, farming equipment, hydro-electric power and automation."

The latest British retreat has taken place in Brazil. There can be little

doubt that effective control of the St. John d'el Rey mining company of Morro Velho is passing into the hands of the U.S. businesses, Armco Steel and Republic Steel, and there is no doubt at all that the Americans are more interested in the vast deposits of high-grade iron ore on the company's estates than in the gold of the ancient mine.

There is nothing very surprising in all this. Every elementary geography text-book has its paragraph on the great iron mountains of Minas Geraes, the enormous riches waiting to be tapped from the heart of Brazil. But the British have been in Brazil for more than a hundred years and the deposits, estimated by the Brazilian Government to hold about 15,000 million tons of ore, have remained undisturbed. It is therefore rather ridiculous to grumble when the Americans—and the Brazilians

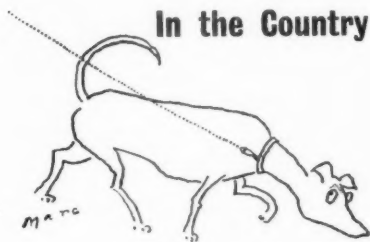
—decide that the property might benefit from a change of tenant.

The St. John d'el Rey story has a moral—one that we cannot afford to ignore. We won our world-wide opportunities for investment and marketing when we managed to find the money for exploitation; that is, when our exports consistently exceeded our imports. To-day we live from hand to mouth, without any surplus to devote to areas awaiting development; and no amount of jingoistic chatter will conjure a surplus out of the rarefied atmosphere of our Welfare State.

We have decided—democratically—to consume everything that we produce, and there should be no crying over spilt opportunities, therefore, when the Americans assume the role of neo-technic colonizers.

We cannot eat our cake and export it.  
MAMMON

## In the Country



### Rooted in Water

UNLIKE most South African millionaires the late Mr. Solly Joel used to winter in England. When asked why he indulged in such a perverse habit, he replied: "I adore Christmas in England because of the strawberries."

Of course few of us have any sort of connection with any kind of a diamond mine, and consequently, deprived of Mr. Joel's hot-houses, are more aware of what is in season. Nevertheless I myself once dug spuds in February. In fact anybody with a cellar or stable could have new potatoes round the year. And I often wonder what happened to the craze for hydroponics. For a time it was as fashionable as owning a Yo-yo, and considerably more creative.

I suppose it was at its height about twenty years ago. Then most of the big London stores had a counter devoted to all the gadgets appertaining to water culture. You could buy seeds and plants, a zinc rack to hold them and perforated so that their roots could dangle through into the glass tank, which you filled with water. The most essential part of the equipment was a packet of chemicals which dissolved in the water to feed the plants. An ounce or two of

sulphate of ammonia, superphosphate, potash and a dash of one of the trace elements provided a balanced diet for the most greedy beanstalks.

I remember seeing a sizeable crop of tomatoes ripening beneath a window in Albany. And an enthusiastic friend of mine who lived in Chelsea was so successful with his crop of broad beans and peas that he had to move out and take a cottage in the country.

Those who failed at hydroponics did so only because their greed made them overfeed the plants.

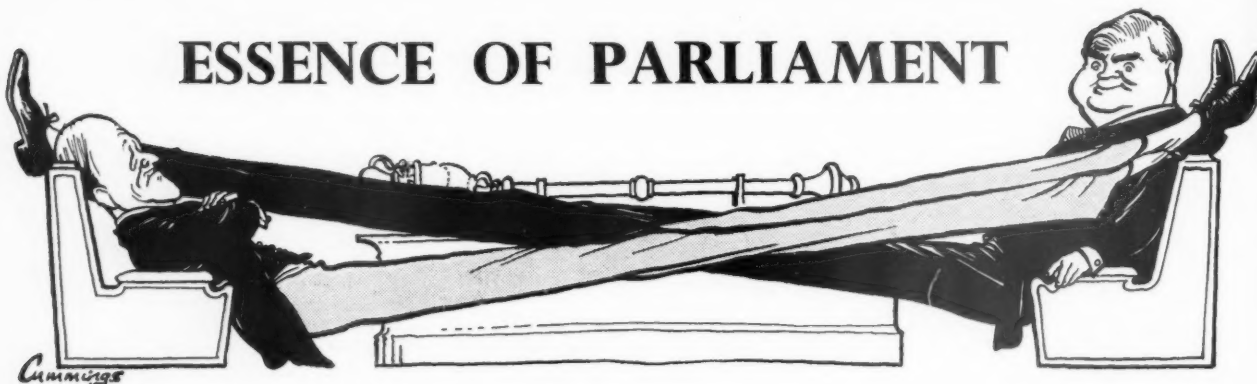
Nor did the craze remain wholly urban. Several poultry farmers discovered that they could more than treble the feeding value of their grain by spreading it on to the floor of a barn, allowing it to sprout by occasionally spraying it with a dilute solution of chemicals, and then feeding the corn when it was about four inches high. By this means they obtain more protein, which is not surprising as any analysis of spring grass will show. But of course the most practical application was in the germination of small flower seeds. Even now I still raise my tobacco plants by this method, sprinkling the fine seeds through a pepper-pot on to blotting-paper, which I keep damped with a solution of nitro-chalk.

RONALD DUNCAN

### Tread Softly

"Major-General Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, and personal representative of Queen Elizabeth, came magnificently . . . —*Evening Gazette*

# ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT



THE egregious Dr. Summerskill, who so short a time ago was anxious to be a Confucian in the next life, has now decided to settle for being a Norwegian in this one. A United Nations in herself, could she not be moved around the world to delimit all disputed frontiers—to-day Yemen and all that, to-morrow Kashmir and proud of it, and the day after that every inch a Gaza strip? It is hard to say what the House of Commons is for if it is not for ragging Dr. Summerskill, and no one could complain of the Tory Members for having their joke when she rose in her place to ask questions about false teeth. But there is a golden rule that many things are worth laughing at once but few things are worth laughing at twice, and to this rule Dr. Summerskill is no exception. "Joke over," a famous sergeant-major used to say when he began to get bored at the giggling, and Mr. Fell made a

mistake when he tried to start it up all over again after the House had had its laugh.

The reason for the dreariness of the committee stage of the Homicide Bill was of course that the Government, to avoid the necessity of a Report Stage, had made up its mind to allow no alteration of a comma in the Bill. This was intelligible tactics. The object of the exercise was to get the Government's bill through the House before Miss Bacon tried to bring in Mr. Silverman's resurrected total abolitionist bill on Friday—a kind of race to see which baby you could get down the plug-hole first. But it made for very dull debating—interminable pummelling of a soft cushion. The Three Musketeers of abolition—Mr. Silverman, Mr. Paget and Mr. Hale—battled manfully on, and Mr. Anthony Greenwood, the youngest of our elder statesmen, did his stuff gracefully from the

Opposition Front Bench. But there was little heart in the debate, and the House, unwept, unhonoured and unhung, agreed with relief to call it a day shortly after nine p.m. and adjourned just in time to get round the corner and have one before they closed.

Even Question Time on these days, though it aroused a certain amount of miscellaneous giggling, did not really get going. Mr. Reader Harris asked whether the Government would return to a bi-partisan foreign policy, but did not stay to hear the answer. Mr. Swinger, avid for smaller things, was concerned in Chestertonian mood for the repair of the road that goes to Silverdale by way of Crackley Gates, and Mr. Langford Holt, mindful of Lady Godiva, was anxious for "a visual barrier" to prevent people on roads from seeing into aerodromes. The Minister, with pursed lips, promised him "a screen." Mr. Godfrey Nicholson, who seems to be casting himself for the enormously important role of Member Against Pomposity, thought that the House would be as ill-advised to lose its wool 'this week about non-perforated stamps as it had been last week to lose it about Parliamentary privilege.

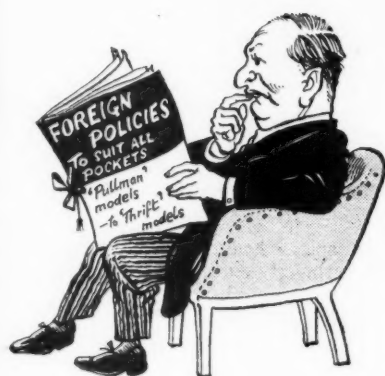
On Wednesday Sir Charles MacAndrew started off the anti-Dumping Bill with such a rush that one might have thought that it was a question of somebody being hanged. "The first amendment," he said, "is unnecessary. The second is out of order. The third has not been selected," and the House was well away before most Members had taken in that the curtain was up at all. It went on, if not at that pace, at any rate pretty fast. But Wednesday's main interest was the Lords, where Lord



Mr. Sydney Silverman

Miss Alice Bacon





Mr. Selwyn Lloyd

St. Aldwyn told their lordships of the Government's new policy of grants for featherbeds. If only they had made Stanley Evans a lord—and what kinder heart was ever more worthy of a coronet?—the fur might have flown. As it was, it was a decorous affair and it was only Lord Waldegrave's maiden speech which made their lordships laugh. It was surprising that there was not a little more apprehension expressed at the degree of control over farming which these grants must inevitably put into Government's hands. If only nationalization is not called nationalization and is brought in by the Conservatives, noble lords are usually for it.

And when it comes to that, not noble lords alone. Both Commons and Lords were thinly attended on Wednesday. The greater company was to be found in Committee Room 24, watching Mr. Marples put on a show of colour television. A cry of "Woof" louder than any cheer that has greeted a Prime Minister for many a long day went up from noble lords and honourable Members as twelve dancing girls, dressed in green and heliotrope and peacock-blue, jived on to the screen, and a gentleman from the West Indies sang

*"In the age of miracles  
It's plain to see  
Colour television is  
A reality."*

This is more than can be said for the House of Commons when the choice for honourable Members lies between dancing girls and dumping. Would it not be a good plan to have a reverse fourteen-day rule by which nothing could be

discussed until fourteen days after it had come off the air?

Members are in a curious state these days. Conservatives lead one aside and explain how much they admire Mr. Aneurin Bevan, and Socialists lead one aside and explain how much they admire Mr. Butler. To do them justice I do not know that there is much evidence of what Mr. Bevan and Mr. Butler think about it. The stage direction bids Hamlet and Laertes to change foils, but even though it spoils the play Hamlet and Laertes seem to be tolerably content to go on with what they have got.

Mr. Butler's formula is the simpler one—that if it is inconvenient to admit that twice two is four, why then the best thing is blandly to deny that twice

two is four and go on denying it and no one can get you. Nothing would induce him to agree that the Conservatives' anti-American motion could possibly damage Anglo-American relations, and there it was. Meanwhile Mr. Howell, who in the intervals of reading French novels is a football referee, was indignant because the Customs had seized the Genet novels destined for Birmingham. Then there was some slightly synthetic indignation about the Government's proposal of a time-table for the Rent Bill; and so to mining subsidence with capable performances by Mr. Maudling and Mr. Renton. Here seems one Ministry, at any rate, which is in competent hands, and Lord Mills could go out and dine with the Pilgrims without any anxiety. CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

## Ballade of Subtle Distinction

*Earl Attlee, when criticized for giving evasive answers to topical questions on his American lecture tour, is said to have replied "I am a statesman, not a politician."*

A STATESMAN and a politician are  
Not wholly disparate, like chalk and cheese;  
Nor are they yet precisely on a par  
Like *eau* and *aqua*, or Gonville and Caius,  
For—though my dictionary disagrees,  
Combining both within one definition—  
Earl Attlee has remarked, while overseas,  
"I am a statesman, not a politician."

A statesman looks at problems from afar  
And speaks in guarded terms of what he sees,  
Much as, e.g., an aging rugger star  
No longer plays but merely referees;  
Whereas among the rabble of M.P.s,  
Who crudely shove and jockey for position  
None dare assert with confidence and ease  
"I am a statesman, not a politician."

One statesman hides behind a large cigar;  
Another chooses the Antipodes;  
The former's taste in hats is more bizarre,  
Though both are honorary LL.D.s;  
A third gives lectures, for fantastic fees,  
On Aspects of the Present World Condition,  
And when provoked gives tongue to words like these:  
"I am a statesman, not a politician."

O noble Earl, O *éminence très grise*,  
You sing your swan-song like a true musician.  
We'd like to hear the chorus once more, please—  
"I am a statesman, not a politician."

E. V. MILNER



## BOOKING OFFICE

### Mr. de Norpois's Secrets

**My Secret Diary of the Dreyfus Case.**  
Maurice Paléologue. Secker and Warburg,  
21/-

"NISARD fell silent, and looked at me with his sharp, searching eye. Then, in a slow, precise voice, as if weighing every word, he said:

'Perhaps we now have the leading thread in our hands—the thread of Ariadne . . . But what shall we find in the labyrinth?'"

The scene was, of course, the Quai D'Orsay: the year 1897. The protagonists (one could not possibly use another word for them), Maurice Paléologue and a colleague of his in the French Diplomatic Corps. They were discussing the sinister undercurrents of the Dreyfus case, then just beginning its fourth year.

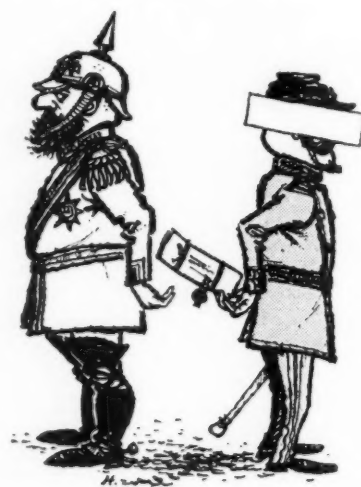
Paléologue, who later had a career of some distinction in diplomacy, will perhaps be chiefly remembered as supplying the model for Monsieur de Norpois in Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*: that suave, ambassadorial figure, sitting permanently on the fence, whose oracular and prolix sayings were absolutely impossible to disentangle for those in search of what he really thought. In these extracts from his diary we have the man to the life: often one might be reading the urbane harangues of his fictional prototype, so much does the one resemble the other.

He was in his middle thirties when the Dreyfus case began, serving with the branch of the French Foreign Office in contact with War Office Secret Service. In addition to that, he was a lieutenant on the Artillery Reserve, so that during his annual recall to the colours he was posted to the department of military intelligence. In this latter capacity he was actually present, in uniform, at the ceremonial degradation of Dreyfus.

The diary is admittedly touched up; and it would probably be safer to regard it as Paléologue's personal account of the case, written up from notes made at the time, rather than as a document showing what the diarist recorded

when those events were taking place. Certainly the writer, on revision, was not going to allow himself to appear in an unfavourable light. Even so, however artificial, the book is enormously readable and vivid; and it is a pity that the translator sometimes vitiates the period flavour by the use of words or phrases characteristic of more recent years.

But if Paléologue is three-parts



Proust he is at least one part Phillips Oppenheim:

"Thanks to the influence of General de Cissey—who was to be ruined a few years later in the shameful adventure of the Baronne de Kaula—he [Maurice Weil] secured a posting as a captain of the reserve to the intelligence department . . ."

This Maurice Weil is Paléologue's main contribution to the history of the *Affaire*, together with an unnamed officer of high rank. These two, together with the known traitor, Esterhazy—that really extraordinary figure who took flight to England, where he lived 'to a ripe old age—had been at work since 1886, according to Paléologue, selling secrets to the German, Austrian and Italian General Staffs. Two officers in the French Secret Service (Henry and Lauth), although not themselves acting

as spies, had personal reasons for covering these other sinister figures in the background.

The accusation of Dreyfus was, therefore, not entirely the result of stupidity and prejudice; there was in it—if Paléologue is correct—a strong measure of deliberate "framing." If a man could be found to be blamed for what had taken place, there was a better chance of the real traitors escaping notice.

The extraordinary thing is that we still do not know the true story. After sixty or more years, with shelves and shelves of every library devoted to the Dreyfus case, much that is of mystery yet remains. Paléologue does not tell us the name of the senior officer said to be deeply involved; while Maurice Weil is, in fact, dismissed in Professor Guy Chapman's excellent book on the *Affaire* (which came out in 1955) as a somewhat contemptible but harmless figure. Presumably the general could be run to earth without too much difficulty; perhaps this diary will alter opinions about Weil. The fact remains that there is still much to clear up.

However, for those who read this diary—which for some reason has been given here quite unnecessarily large day-to-day headlines—without undue concentration on the detail of the case, there is a great deal of entertainment. Not least D'Annunzio at a luncheon party: "You asked me just now what my method was in love, *madame*. It is silence and action . . . I have never known either remorse or regret; I live only in the present; I perpetually need new pleasures and new sensations . . . Being *immoral*? What could be more simple! But only a genius can be *moral*." How rightly the French sometimes call it *La Belle Époque*—even though it wasn't that for the unfortunate Dreyfus.

ANTHONY POWELL

## Unchanging

**Something Fishy.** P. G. Wodehouse.  
*Herbert Jenkins*, 10/6

The boundaries of Mr. Wodehouse's world are not fixed. This time, as well as butlers, peers, rich Americans, admirable

girls, healthy young men and the London suburb of Valley Fields, there is a Tontine. There is also mention of Matisse. Time marches on. However, if adventurous in content, the novel is traditional in form. Ranging the novels into four classes and *Jill the Reckless*, I should give *Something Fishy* a Second. Occasionally the joke is that this is the joke that the author has so often made before; but on the whole Mr. Wodehouse produces new jokes, something almost unknown among professional humorists after their first book. If he has never amused you, this story will not convert you; it may confirm your dislike. But if you are already a Wodehouse fan your admiration will be nourished and renewed. Somehow, even if it is the mixture as before, he makes it seem both warmingly familiar and sharply fresh. He even casts a glow over Rosendale Road.

R. G. G. P.

**The Horseman's Year**, 1957 Edition.  
Edited by W. E. Lyon, Collins, 16/-

This eleventh edition of the annual is much superior to its predecessors both in the text and in the illustrations. As far as the equestrian events were concerned this country had a good year, and the Olympic games in Stockholm, where Britain finished first in the Three-day Event and third in the Grand Prix Jumping competition, are described with accuracy and enthusiasm. The photographs reveal how perfectly man and horse must be trained to win an international event.

The flat-racing season on the other hand was very disappointing as the French won the Derby, the Oaks, the Gold Cup and the St. Leger. These melancholy facts are faced squarely by John Hislop and no attempt is made to minimize our defeats. There are reports by experts on the year's foxhunting, steeplechasing, point-to-point racing and principal horse shows, but the most stimulating article is about the twenty-five packs hunting on the Continent. I feel I should enjoy a day with the Rallye Malgré Tout under the mastership of the Duc de Magenta.

R. F. M.

**Justine**, Lawrence Durrell, Faber, 15/-

Poets, with very few exceptions (the name of Mr. Roy Fuller springs instantly to mind in this connection) should, perhaps, not write novels. Though Mr. Durrell's *Black Book*, published ten years ago, gave Mr. T. S. Eliot new hope "for the future of prose fiction," this novel, deliberately experimental in technique, is written in a decidedly pretentious style, including such phrases as "mental - emotional calculus," "magistral calm," "ratiocinative faculty," "desirelessness," etc. The *real* heroine, we are told in the blurb, is the City of Alexandria where the scene is set; but Justine herself, who has "a brown harsh body" and whose voice is also sometimes harsh (she has "lost the knack of crying,"

and her earlobes taste of salt), is less impressive than her Sadian namesake. The total effect is on the whole epitomized by one of the narrators: "a banal story of an adultery which was among the cheapest commonplaces of the city," which does not "deserve romantic or realistic trappings." An appendix contains seven pages of "Consequential Data" and "Notes in the Text."

J. M-R.

**Memory to Memory**, Sir Arnold Lunn.  
*Hollis and Carter*, 21/-

As the reminiscent writing of the Lunn family accumulates Sir Henry Lunn is becoming a runner-up to Sir George Sitwell and Philip Henry Gosse as the perfect father for an autobiographer. It is a pity that he disappears from Sir Arnold's pages so soon; but there is so much else to be discussed, always with gusto, running hotels, mountaineering, ski-ing, Catholic controversy and Right-wing politics. He writes springily and shares Joad's gift for moving buoyantly on after throwing out a debatable suggestion. Though he makes few positive criticisms, some of his negative criticisms of the middle-class Left are novel and interesting—their reluctance to apply Freudian methods to explain their hostility to soldiers, for example. While he condemns selective indignation, he shows very selective sympathies. He is much more convincing on Religion than on Politics because he has more idea of what makes his religious opponents tick. However, an autobiographer should go out for his readers' attention rather than their agreement and Sir Arnold is never dull.

R. G. G. P.

**No Name on the Door**, A. F. Williams.  
*W. H. Allen*, 18/-

This is the life-story of Gordon Selfridge, and because it is written by a one-time fellow director of the Oxford Street store it carries no overtones of contempt or amusement for a man whose life was dedicated to commerce as a poet's might be to beauty. To Selfridge a phrase like "the art of merchandizing" had a spiritual ring, and he only began to fall in love with women when he was too old to be passionate over trade. It is this single-mindedness which the book chiefly makes real. Selfridge's aphorisms for businessmen—endlessly quoted—are nothing more than office mottoes; his amorous exploits nothing more than human follies. His orgiastic parties and inspired publicity notions could have been a dozen other men's. But the real man—if anyone ever got inside him, and Mr. Williams doesn't claim to—was the man who saw in commerce all earthly experience worth having. There is a poignant sketch of his last, discredited years, when, banished to an office on the other side of the street, he sat watching the empire he had created, and had had taken from him.

J. B. B.



"I think I may say without fear of contradiction that we have a really splendid audience to-night."



## AT THE OPERA

*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*  
(COVENT GARDEN)

SQUARE pegs, displaced persons, round holes. That was the intermittent trouble with this new production which had been so long a-gestating.

First evident misfit was Peter Pears. In so far as Mr. Kubelik and the band allowed us to hear it, his long exposition to Walther of the song-modes (first scene) seemed phrased for the connoisseur; but he was as tall as or taller than everybody else on the stage, Schwarz the stocking-weaver apart, who doesn't really count, and gestured like a French dancing master, with overtones from Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida*. In other words Mr. Pears was expressly devised by jealous Nature *not* to act David.

Before the curtain went up I surmised, and now I know, that Georges Wakhevitch is temperamentally averse to South German gothic. St. Katherine's Church, with its wrought iron grille and ruddy range of stained glass window, was pretty enough in a Puginesque way. The final scene, with the guilds marching through an arch and down a ramp, glowed with an almost Florentine magnificence. What convinced me that Mr. Wakhevitch is human like the rest of us and can be mediocre when he tries hard was his Act II and his Act III, Sc. 1. The first was composed of half-timbered dolls' houses of the kind estate agents used to build as ads. on development sites. The second, Hans Sachs's workshop, had so many and such splendid hammerbeams that, instead of supporting, they threatened to bring the roof down and the entire Covent Garden flies with them.

Musically the night had its ups and



downs. Mr. Kubelik made the Prelude sound as if scored for massed brass bands. By the middle of Act II the orchestra, especially its upper strings, was dreamlike. Thereafter all was set for fine bursts or stretches of singing by Joan Sutherland (Eva) and James Pease, the boyish, indomitable Sachs. Out of consideration, apparently, for Mr. Pease's tender years the remaining Masters were either beardless or so scaled-down in years that their reliability trial, Act I, looked like a youth rally. If allowed to come out of his shell Geraint Evans will make a trenchant Beckmesser. Already there is venom in his words—and not at the expense of his vocal line.

It was the Walther who made us shrug. His Loge in *Rheingold*, as many remember with gratitude, proved beyond doubt that Erich Witte is a first-rate Wagnerian. Allowance must be made for the fact that, in addition to producing this new *Master-singers*, he undertook when a casting emergency arose to learn Walther in English at little more than a fortnight's notice. Extenuations must not blind us to the fact that his singing was tight, dry, quavery and studded with notes at which he rose like a trout from below or, as they say, scooped.

"You're lucky," I heard a friend of the house say to some complainant, "to have a tenor who can sing Walther in English at all." Since when has *Meistersinger* in

English been a holiday of obligation? Most opera-goers keen on Wagner would as lief hear it in German any day. Certainly I cannot imagine anyone wanting to hear the present (mercifully unidentified) translation for its own sake. The sole purpose of the new translator seems to be to take his standard predecessor down a peg or two.

Thus, Beckmesser's "Here does he lurk and silently do his cruel work" becomes "Here does he *sit* and silently do," etc. Cobbling away under the elder tree on Midsummer Eve, Sachs used to complain to the serenading Town Clerk, "Your shoes give me naught but sorrow." He now, believe it or not, sings "Your shoes give me needless worry." There's no point in doing things by halves. Let Covent Garden hand over the libretto to the script-writers of "Mrs. Dale's Diary" and have a real chatty job made of it.

CHARLES REID



## AT THE PLAY

*The Lesson—Medea*  
(OXFORD PLAYHOUSE)

IF this double bill makes no epochs, and can hardly expect to find London play-goers vaporizing their basic along the Oxford road, its two first-rate acting performances by Joan Miller and Edgar

Wreford should at least inspire local pilgrimages by bus or bicycle. It has four days to go.

The pity is that the two performances are in two different plays, or rather (because *The Lesson* is bound to be a one-man show) that Mr. Wreford couldn't have joined Miss Miller in *Medea*, and prevented its seeming the one-woman show which it shouldn't entirely be, but unfortunately becomes. A star performer with repertory support must so often unbalance the whole.

*Medea* is an Anouilh extemporization on a short, harsh passage from the classical theme—passionate love turned to passionate hate; the improviser's invention struggles to take flight, and sometimes achieves a dazzling cadenza, but since all the loving was over before curtain-rise, and only the hate remains, the impression is that the best tunes have been missed. When the play opens Miss Miller, in tattered shreds of an old grandeur, is encamped gipsy-style on the outskirts of Corinth, and already railing in good set terms at the distant lights and music of the city, where the faithless Jason is celebrating on the eve of his marriage to King Creon's daughter; and her vengeful fires burn throughout, sometimes at the smoulder, more often in full, searing flame. Momentarily we catch sight of the terrible tenderness she once felt, and the dramatist lends her his best cunning in a relieving passage of dialectics with Creon, when she incites him to kill her, and then shrivels him with her contempt for the waning violence of old kings. The scene with Jason also damps her down, but only because his priggish, middle-aged prosings about his decision to abandon the roustabout Fleece-hunting life deny her the chance to get a word in edgeways. But in the main the torch of her passion burns high, up to the final explosion of revenge—and this, involving the sorceress's sorcery for the first time, drops oddly into a work which has discussed the whole affair in terms of entirely magic-free and ungodlike—human, in fact—relationships. As in the same author's *Antigone*, the costumes are modern, and the fact that Jason has unkindly been tricked out in a suit of white ducks, unhappily suggesting an embittered Pinkerton, is only partly rationalized by the appearance of his retinue in U.S. Army uniform.

Eugene Ionesco's gruesome frolic, *The Lesson*, is rich in laughs: an extended (perhaps over-extended) music-hall sketch with a super-Goon quality. The house rocks merrily at Mr. Wreford's crumbling old crammer as he totters and creaks about his bright, pretty sitting-room spouting Niagaras of quasi-scholastic balderdash at his bright, pretty pupil. The eager, doll-like schoolgirl of Prunella Scales feeds him adroitly. We roar as she answers, after long thought, that three from four makes seven, but a



Jason—JEROME WILLIS

Medea—JOAN MILLER

[Medea

moment later multiplies two astronomical figures to a correct solution in a twinkling. Then . . . was it our imagination? . . . comes a faintly sinister undertone. Reciting, at immense speed, a complex treatise on the neo-Spanish languages, and showing his pupil how to enunciate *Butterfly!* and *Pepperpot!* with maximum volume and effect, the professor has drawn an imaginary knife from the side-board drawer. Surely he can't be . . .? But, yes. He has mounted the table, violently reminiscing about a friend who could only pronounce an "f" as an "f" and suddenly the farce leaps to a climax of tragedy. And a moment later the curtain has fallen on laughter all the same. Mad, mad stuff. What does it all mean? Nothing. Everything. What does it matter?

#### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

*Under Milk Wood* (New—29/8/56), Dylan Thomas brilliant in three dimensions; *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57), Flanders and Swann playing and singing with wit. For a small tragedy greatly done, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Phoenix—5/12/56).

J. B. BOOTHROYD

### AT THE PICTURES

*Town on Trial—  
The Man in the Sky*

THE film whodunit—like, for that matter, the literary whodunit—is often a dreary string of clichés which holds one's attention only because it is a puzzle, and only so long as it remains a puzzle. What makes *Town on Trial* (Director: John Guillermin) so welcome is that almost throughout its length it is in grain interesting and enjoyable as a film. My main points of criticism are two: first, the fact that the "love interest" seems rather artificially dragged in, as if with the idea that the average audience won't be happy without it; and second, the convention that plagues nearly every kind of dramatic presentation of a murder mystery—the convention that the unmasking of the murderer must be sudden, loud and preferably spectacular to watch. But most of the film is so good, so satisfyingly well done that these two faults don't at all spoil one's pleasure.

The central character is a grim, curt superintendent of police (John Mills) investigating a murder in the town of Oakley Park. At the beginning of the film we see the murder committed, though without being able to identify the murderer: we look through his eyes and hear his narrating voice (as he makes a statement to the police), trying to keep it in the mind's ear so as to recognize it later, and—if my own experience is anything to go by—quite forgetting to try this because the story is so absorbingly well told.

After that opening, the murderer's own



[Town on Trial

Doctor Femer—CHARLES COBURN

narrative is abandoned and the film becomes a straightforward account of the superintendent's investigations. The title is not really justified: he does not cast his net so wide, for quite early the suspects are narrowed down to three (and the film plays fair—one of them in fact did it). But as I say, the film is not a mere puzzle and is not to be judged as one. The characters could easily be summed up in phrases suggesting that they were from stock: the elderly local doctor with something dubious in his past (Charles Coburn), the flashy tennis-club cad (Derek Farr), the neurotic young man (Alex McCowen) with the anxious mother (Fay Compton), the young daughter (Elizabeth Seal) of the consequential man in the running for mayor (Malcolm Keen)—they could all be cliché figures; but the script (Ken Hughes and Robert Westerby), the acting and the direction make them all individuals. Miss Seal as the young girl succeeds in being quite memorable—and by no means only because she has a scene in which she shocks everybody by her exhibitionistic dancing of a mambo; but the others also are able to make their personal impression. Mr. Mills dominates it, naturally, but it adds up to a first-rate film of its kind, full of good work. I must manage to see it again some time.

The first Ealing film to be made under the aegis of M.G.M. is *The Man in the Sky* (Director: Charles Crichton), and this too is very well worth seeing. Basically it is a suspense story: the centrally important scene is half an hour or so in which a test pilot (Jack Hawkins) is alone in a plane that he is determined to bring down safely; but what makes it

more than that is a domestic scene afterwards, when he has succeeded, and has a violent quarrel with his overwrought wife (Elizabeth Sellars) who taxes him with not thinking of her and his little sons when he did it. This really stings him after his tremendous ordeal, for he had felt precisely that he was doing it for them: the point being that if the plane, a prototype freighter, could be saved (instead of being allowed to crash in flames after he had jumped out), so would the small, impecunious aircraft firm he works for.

The whole story is admirably handled, its grip is hypnotic and the playing is outstandingly good. Mr. Hawkins is splendid as the conscientious, brave, worried pilot who wonders whether he isn't too old for this kind of thing. As a film work of art, this is better than *Town on Trial*; I spent more space on that only because the skill and imagination with which it refreshes an old formula make it notable.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Survey**  
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Powell-Pressburger version of *Ill Met by Moonlight* has opened in London; review next week. Established ones worth seeing: *Gervaise* (19/12/56), *War and Peace* (28/11/56) and *Baby Doll* (9/1/57).

That most enjoyable musical *High Society* (26/12/56) heads the new releases. Others: *Four Girls in Town* and *Everything but the Truth*, in the same programme, as they were when I wrote about them (23/1/57), and quite a gripping Pacific-war piece, *Between Heaven and Hell* (16/1/57).

RICHARD MALLETT



## ON THE AIR

## Eleven Plus Variety

ONE of the more ludicrous of our popular misconceptions is the middle-class notion that debates in the House of Lords produce oratorical and philosophical banquets. Our pensioned sages, it is said, free from the cares of office, getting and spending, are able to discuss mundane matters of politics with Olympian detachment, Shavian wit and a donnish reverence for the niceties of language. I have never subscribed to this view: whenever the peers bring themselves to discuss matters in which I am interested and not wholly misinformed I am apt to find them dull and incredibly ignorant.

I had hoped to comment this week on the Upper House's symposium on television, but regrettably nothing was said that is worthy of comment. A few opportunist remarks from speakers with a financial stake in the subject, a rehash of bar parlour platitudes, Lord Beveridge's silly claim that he wouldn't accept a television set even as a gift . . . and that was all.

So for copy I must turn again to the programmes. And first to the much-discussed play *Eleven Plus*. Now every other critic seems to have decided that Elaine Morgan's important piece, advertised as a play, sailed under false colours. It was pure documentary, they say, or it was "fictionalized documentation." Because the facts of the eleven plus educational crisis were presented fairly and cogently the play is dismissed as propaganda or ratiocinative chiselling. And then, oddly enough, the quality of the documentation is attacked because



[Go Round Merry

SHIRLEY ABICAIR

HUMPHREY LYTTLTON

Miss Ursula Howells, the worried mother and new recruit to the teaching profession, neither looked nor spoke like a product of the Welfare State.

It is true that the play lacked most of the traditional ingredients of stage drama. There was no saucy maid to dust away the unforgiving minutes, no telephone to punctuate the tension. Nobody was queer, communist, illegitimate or over-sexed, and not a single commandment was broken. But it is monstrous to suggest that writers who reject the clichés and manage to devise really exciting drama from matters of ordinary everyday controversy should be demoted to the ranks of the tractarians. Shaw's "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant" still upset most people who regard the stage as nothing more than a frame for fettled inanity, but the critics would not, I hope, seriously question their credentials as legitimate drama.

It is always pleasing to be able to

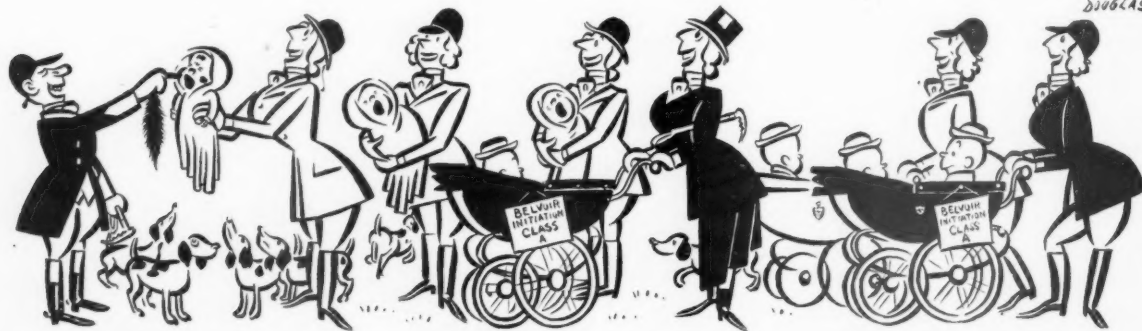
praise a television variety show. "Go Round Merry," starring Shirley Abicair, partnered by Humphrey Lyttelton and the Coronets and produced by Graeme Muir, got away to a splendid start. After a plague of imitation Clooneys and Mermans Miss Abicair's honest vocal endeavours seemed wonderfully original. She sings without any obvious gimmick, refuses to wiggle, grins economically and never allows herself to become emotionally swamped by the unsubtle wording of the modern lyric. She is as fresh as a daisy. Illness, unfortunately, has interrupted the series.

Lyttelton is another refreshing character, a jazzman content to display his exuberance solely through the rhythm and creative versatility of his music.

At long last the B.B.C. is beginning to make use of our small company of jazz musicians.

Jazz has now become fashionable, a proper subject for critical (over-critical, in my view) examination in the respectable Sunday newspapers, and Portland Place is desperately anxious to climb on to the band-wagon. Unfortunately, there is still an alarming tendency among the Corporation's despots to confuse jazz with "pops," rhythm with "correct tempo," swing with rock 'n' roll, and instrumental spontaneity with "singing strings" and "golden trumpet" arrangements. And, unfortunately, it is still necessary for the jazz-lover to keep his steam radio tuned to Paris and Hilversum.

The B.B.C. and the I.T.A. are implored to drop just one of their imported serials and instead give a regular hearing to such home-grown jazzmen as Lyttelton, Barber, Mulligan and company. BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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